

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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S E C R E T LIMA 2314

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, PE

SUBJECT: CONTINUING POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

REF: LIMA 2204

SUMMARY: POLITICAL TENSION, CATALYZED IN PART BY RECENT EVENTS IN POLITICAL/LABOR AREA, REMAINS HIGH. DISSIDENT MILITARY OFFICERS LED BY NAVY ARE DISTURBED BY PERCEIVED LEFTWARD GOVERNMENTAL DRIFT AND HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING VARIOUS FORMS OF OPPOSITION INCLUDING POSSIBLE COUP. APRA PARTY AND PRIVATE INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS MAY PREPARE FOR MORE ACTIVE OPPOSITION ROLE. FACT THAT CURRENT "COUP PLOTTING" IS NOT BEING CLOSELY HELD MAY MEAN SERIOUS ATTEMPT IS NOT TO BE MOUNTED NOW. END SUMMARY.

1. RECENT SURFACING OF POLITICAL TENSIONS IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO PREVIEW OF GOP PLAN TUPAC AMARU (DRAFT OF WHICH IS RADICAL IN CONTENT AND TONE); LABOR UNREST, PARTICULARLY THE AREQUIPA GENERAL STRIKE; AND MORE VOCAL OPPOSITION WITHIN AND WITHOUT MILITARY TO PERCEIVED LEFTWARD DRIFT OF MORALES BERMUDEZ REGIME: "COUP PLOTTING" WHICH OCCASIONED SPATE OF RUMORS LATE LAST WEEK APPARENTLY CONTINUES BUT PLANNING IS VAGUE AND DOES NOT SEEM TO BE TOO CLOSELY HELD. THIS ACTIVITY SEEMINGLY CENTERED IN NAVY, AND LINKED TO APRA AS WELL AS THE PRIVATE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, MAY BE INTENDED MORE AS A WARNING

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TO MORALES BERMUDEZ THAT LEFTWARD DRIFT WILL MEET WITH STIFF

OPPOSITION THAN AS SERIOUS COUP EFFORT.

2. A PERUVIAN INDUSTRIALIST WHO IS AT LEAST TANGENTIALLY INVOLVED OUTLINED OPPOSITION EFFORT TO EMBOFF MARCH 8. HE SAID EFFORT IS CENTERED ON FIRM NAVY OPPOSITION TO WHAT IT PERCEIVES AS THE LEFTWARD TREND WHICH IS CELARLY DEMONSTRATED IN THE PLAN TUPAC AMARU. THE NAVY IS ALLEGEDLY SUPPORTED BY A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF ARMY AND AIR FORCE OFFICERS. ACCORDING TO SAME SOURCE, THREE REGIONAL ARMY COMMANDERS ARE IN CONTACT WITH NAVY DISSIDENTS. EXPANDING ON THEME OF DISCORD IN ARMY, SOURCE SAID THAT GENERAL SANCHEZ, COMMANDER OF THE THIRD REGION (AREQUIPA) HAD HIS "EARS PINNED BACK" BY RULING JUNTA LAST WEEK FOR HIS MISMANAGMENT OF AREQUIPA GENERAL STRIKE. EMBASSY IS UNABLE TO CONFIRM THIS, BUT AMBASSADOR WAS TOLD BY FONOFF OFFICIAL MARCH 7 THAT CABINET HAD SPLIT OVER AREQUIPA STRIKE ISSUE. FERNANDEZ MALDONADO AND HIS SUPPORTERS PREVAILED AND IT WAS FERNANDEZ MALDONADO WHO FINALLY RESOLVED AREQUIPA SITUATION (THIS MAY HAVE LED TO WEEKEND RUMOR THAT FERNANDEZ MALDONADO HAD TAKEN OVER GOVERNMENT). THE AREQUIPA STRIKE WAS SETTLED MARCH 5 BY MAKING VARIOUS CONCESSIONS. TO UNIONS.

3. ACCORDING TO ABOVE SOURCE AND OTHERS FAMILIAR WITH DISSIDENT ACTIVITY, THE APRA PARTY IS INVOLVED IN WHATEVER PLOTTING IS TAKING PLACE AND IS SAID TO "SUPPORT FULLY WITH ITS CIVILIAN FORCE" EFFORTS OF NAVY AND OTHER MILITARY DISSIDENTS. IN ADDITION, AN AIR FORCE COLONEL APPROACHED THE PERUVIAN SOCIETY OF INDUSTRIES ASKING THAT THEY CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR MODIFICATION OF THE GOVERNMENTS ECONOMIC POLICY WHICHIS SAID BY SOCIETY TO BE STRANGLY PRIVATE ENTERPRISE. SOCIETY OF INDUSTRY OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF THAT HIS ORGANIZATION, JOINTED BY AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURING ASSOCIATION AND THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE THROUGHOUT PERU, ARE STEPPING UP ACTIVITY FOR THEIR OWN REASONS UNRELATED TO ANY COUP PLOTTING. OFFICIAL SAID THAT BUSINESS GROUPS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE MORALES BERMUDEZ REGIME INTENDS TO PROCEED TOWARD A SOCIALIZED ECONOMY AND NOW MAY BE THHEIR LAST OPPORTUNITY TO ALTER THAT COURSE.

4. SERIOUS STUDENT RIOTING IN DOWNTOWN LIMA MARCH 5, WHICH ACCORDING TO SUTDENTS RESULTED IN ONE STUDENT DEATH, AND THE MARCH 5 MACHINE-GUNNING OF THE HOME OF EX-NAVY MINISTER AND AMBASSADOR
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TO THE U.S. ADMIRAL JOSE ARCE LARCO (NO UNJURIES REPORTED) ADDED TO WEEKEND TENSION. ACCORDING TO LEFTIST EXPRESO, ARCE, WHO CLAIMED HE HAD NO ENEMIES, SAID MACHINE-GUNNING COULD HAVE BEEN WORK OF
CIA. (NOTE: ARCE WAS AND REMAINS EXTREMELY UNPOPULAR WITH NAVY OFFICER CORPS.)

5. COMMENT: POLITICAL POT IS BUBBLING BUT "COUP PLOTTING"

APPEARS TOO WIDELY KNOWN ON THE LIMA RUMOR CIRCUIT TO CONSTITUTE
A CREDIBLE EFFORT. ALTHOUGH TIMING FOR POSSIBLE COUP IS SAID
TO BE THE MARCH 7-15 PERIOD, THIS APPEARS UNLIKELY. NEITHER
MILITARY NOR POLICE NOW SEEMS TO BE ON ALERT STATUS ALTHOUGH
BOTH ARE AWARE OF COUP TALK. DISCONTENT, HOWEVER, IS SERIOUS
AND CERTAIN TO CONTINUE. END RESULT MAY BE MODIFICATION OF
GOP POLITICAL PLAN (EMBASSY NOW ANALYZING AND WILL REPORT ON
PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF THE PLAN) OR ISOLATION AND REMOVAL OF THE
DISSIDENT ELEMENTS.
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